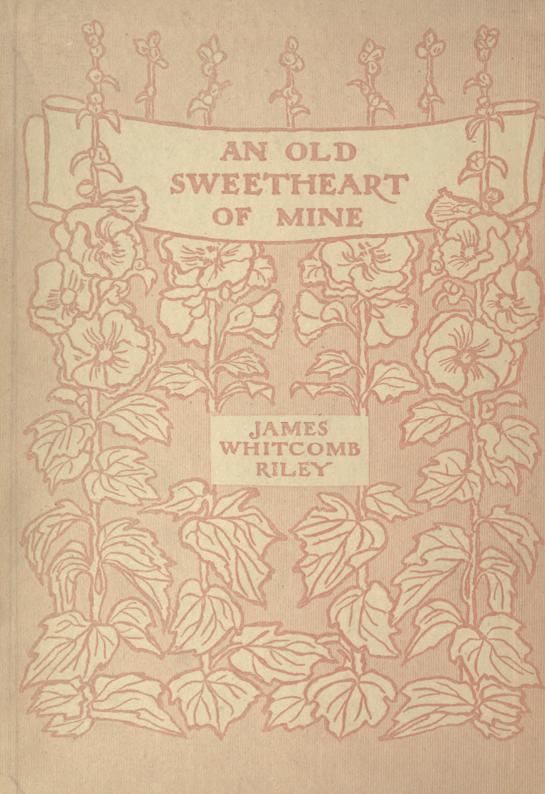
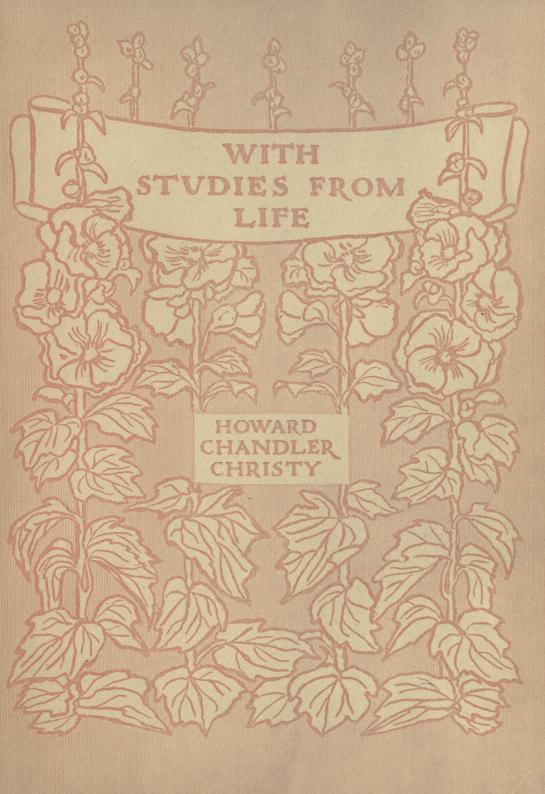
AN OLD SWEETHEART OF MINE



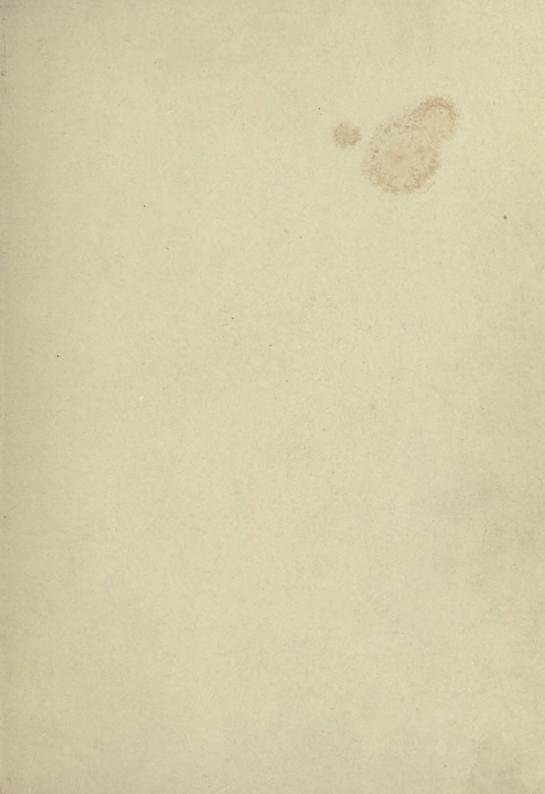
JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

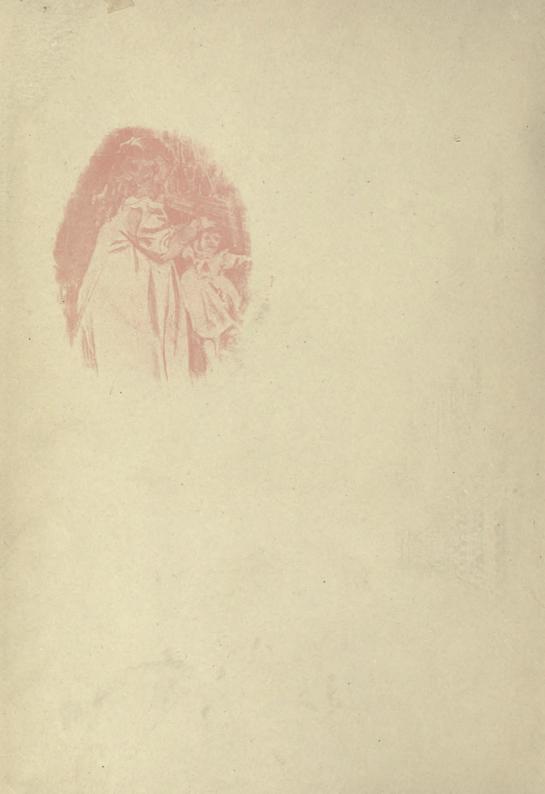
ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY





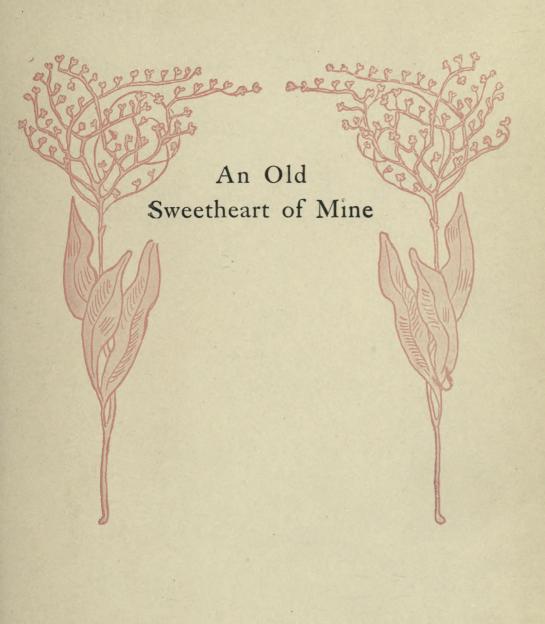
Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2007 with funding from Microsoft Corporation







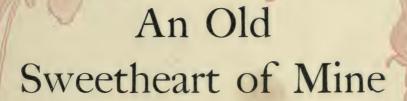












James Whitcomb Riley

Drawings by
Howard Chandler Christy

Decorations by Virginia Keep

The Bobbs-Merrill Company Publishers Indianapolis Copyright, 1888–1899–1902 James Whitcomb Riley

Copyright, 1902 'The Bowen-Merrill Company

The Prayer-Perfect

Dear Lord, kind Lord,
Gracious Lord, I pray,
Thou with look on all I love
Tenderly today!
Weed their hearts of weariness;
Scatter every care
Down a wake of angel-wings
Winnowing the air.

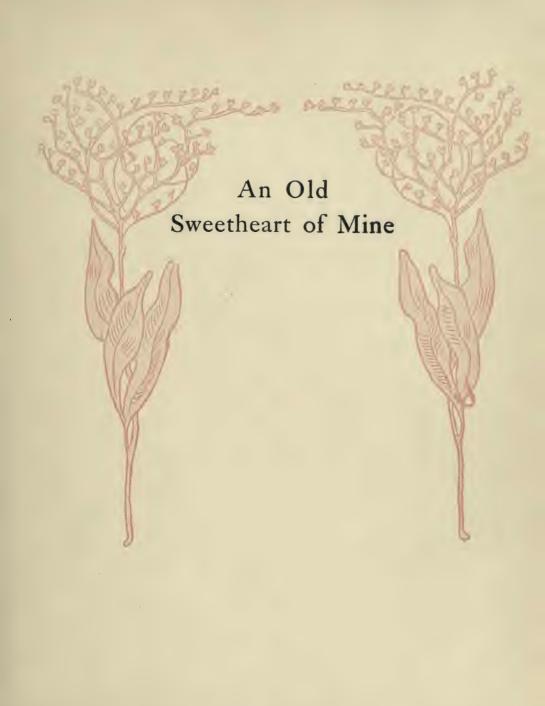
Bring unto the sorrowing
All release from pain;
Let the lips of laughter
Overflow again;
And with all the needy
O divide, I pray,
This vast treasure of content
That is mine today!
—James Whitcomb Riley

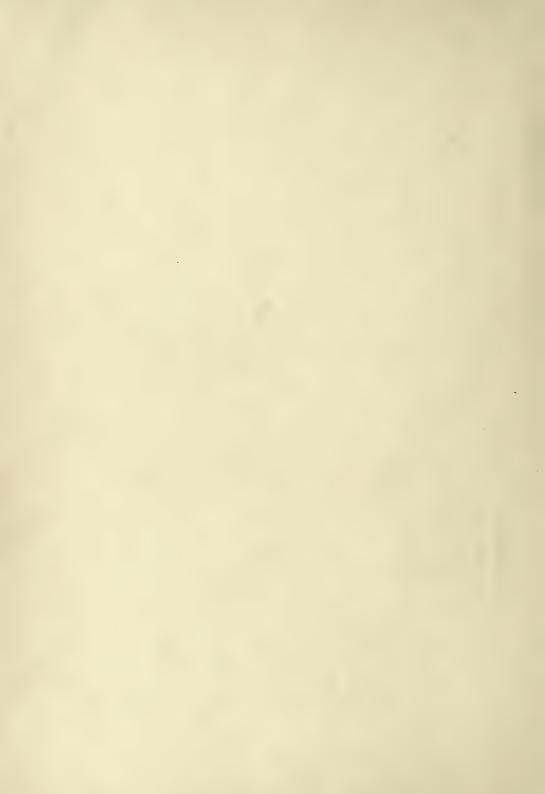
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Press of
Braunworth & Co.
Bookbinders and Printers
Brooklyn, N. Y.





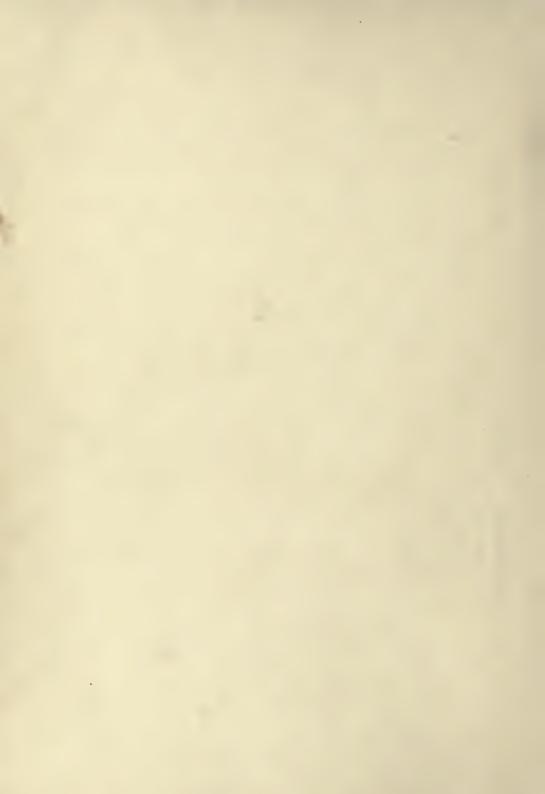


Inscribed

To GEORGE C. HITT

The beginning of whose steadfast friendship was marked by the first publication of these verses which now, expanded by writer, honored by publisher and masterfully graced by artist, seem to be a worthier symbol of the author's grateful and affectionate regard for his earliest friend





List of Illustrations

- I Frontispiece—An Old Sweetheart of Mine.
- II A fair, illusive vision that would vanish into air
- III The then of changeless sunny days—The now of shower and shine
- IV The old bookshelves and prints along the wall
 - V I find the smiling features of an old sweetheart of mine
- VI Its fate with my tobacco and to vanish with the smoke

List of Illustrations

- VII When my truant fancies wander with that old sweetheart of mine
- VIII The voices of my children and the mother as she sings
 - IX For I find an extra flavor in Memory's mellow wine
 - X O childhood days enchanted! O the magic of the spring
 - XI To—smile, behind my lesson, at that old sweetheart of mine
 - XII A face of lily-beauty, with a form of airy grace

List of Illustrations

- XIII When first I kissed her, and she answered the caress
- XIV I slipped the apple in it—and the teacher didn't know
 - XV She gave me her photograph, and printed "Ever Thine"
- XVI And again I feel the pressure of her slender little hand
- XVII Where the vines were ever fruited, and the weather ever fine
- XVIII And she my faithful sweetheart till the golden hair was gray
 - XIX The door is softly opened, and—my wife is standing there

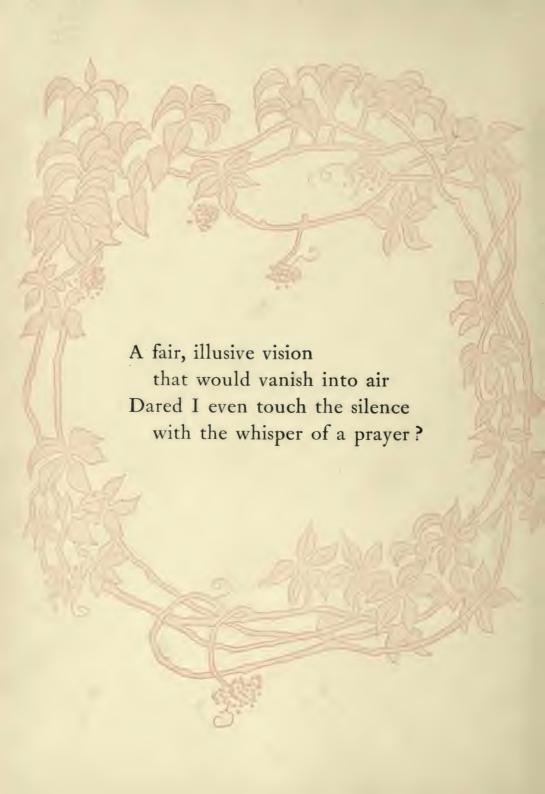






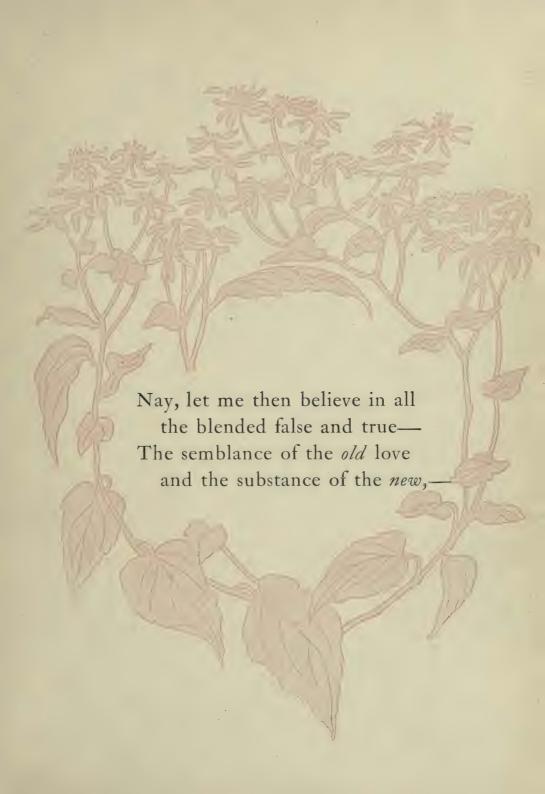


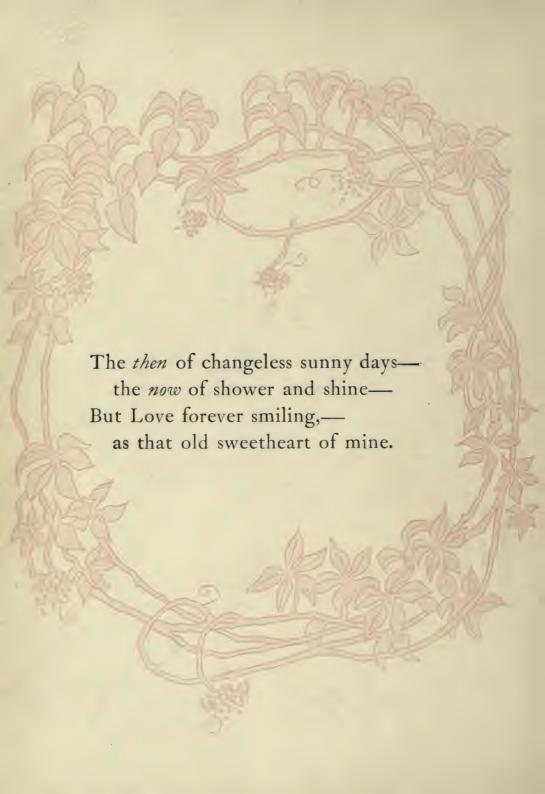




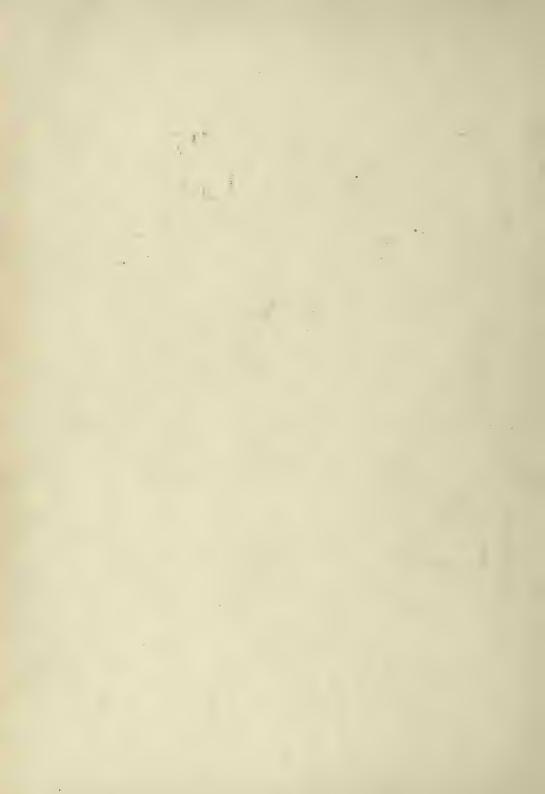


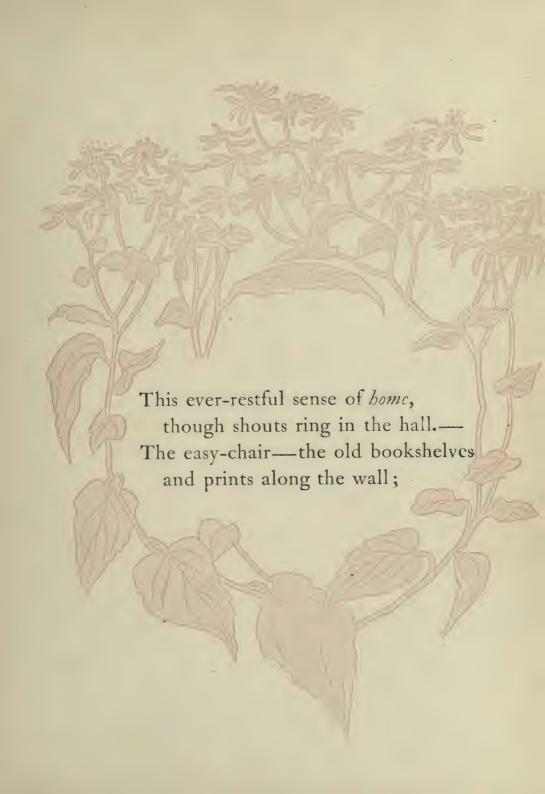


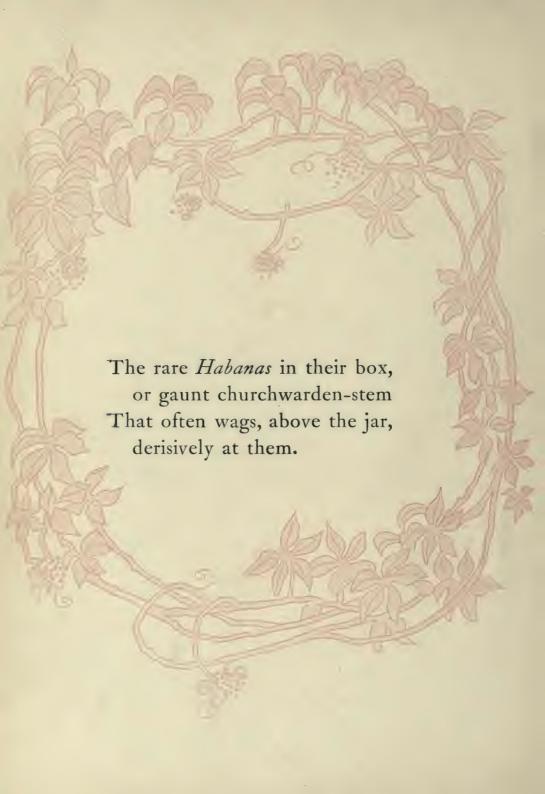




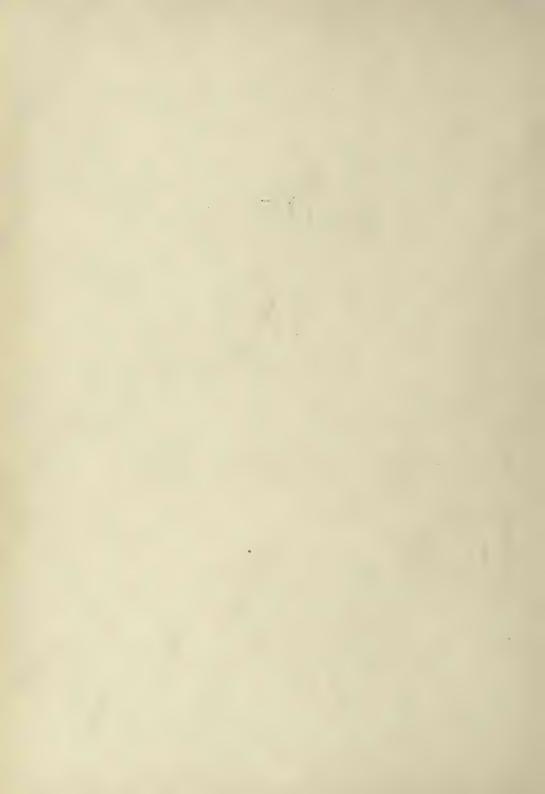




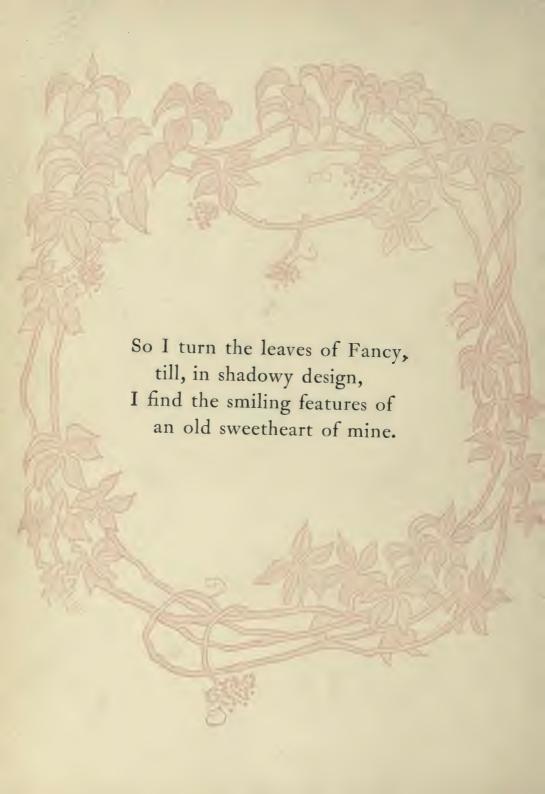








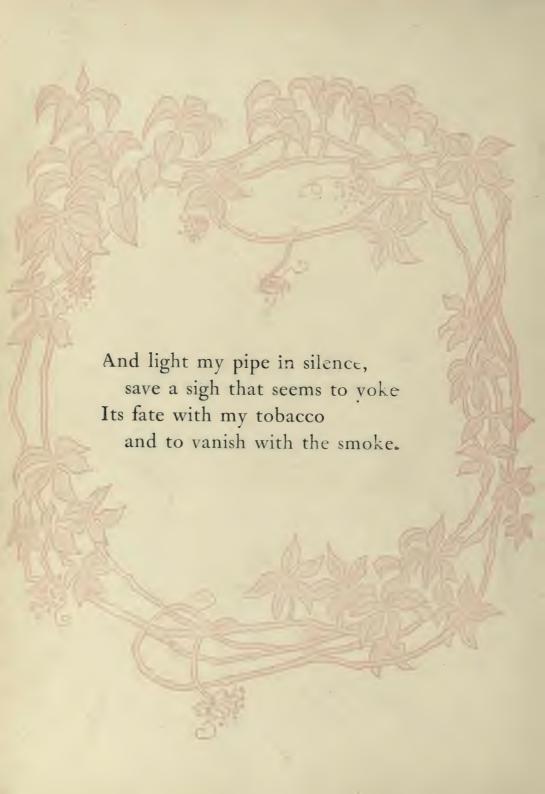




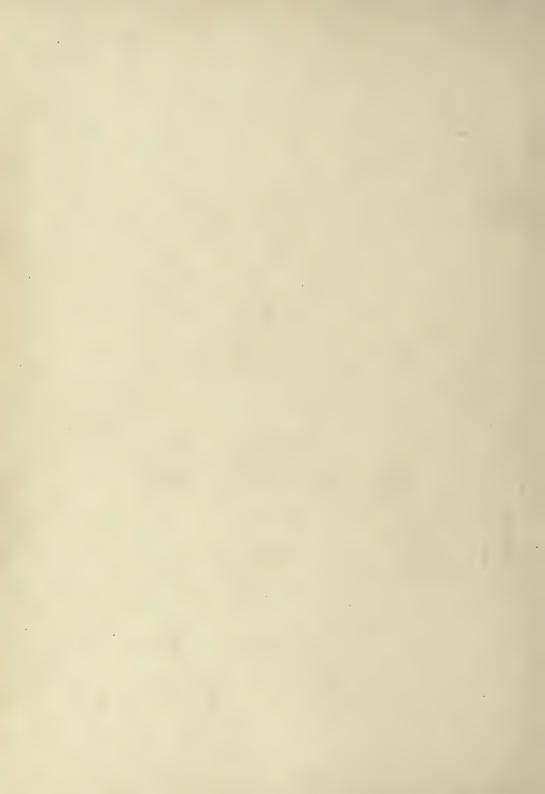




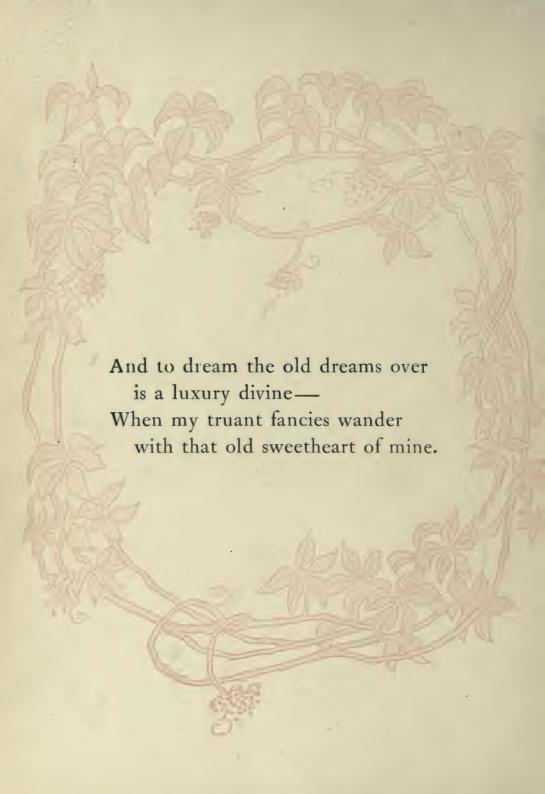
The lamplight seems to glimmer with a flicker of surprise,
As I turn it low—to rest me of the dazzle in my eyes,





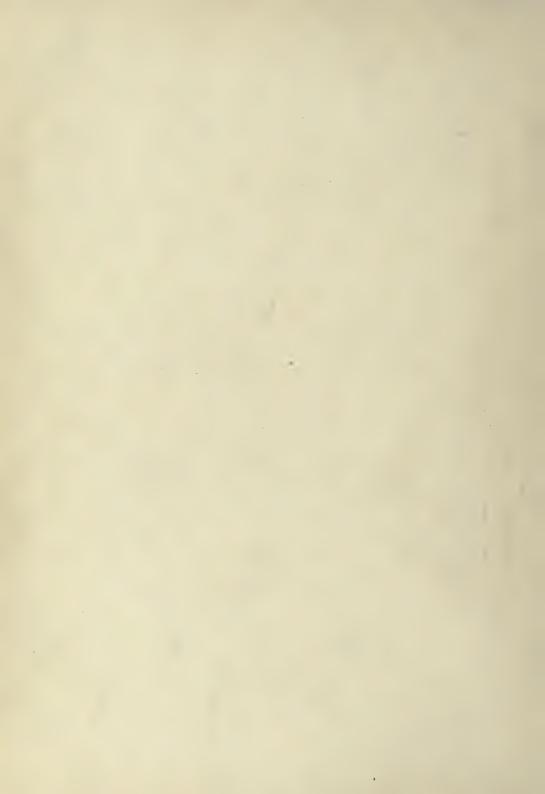


'Tis a *fragrant* retrospection,—
for the loving thoughts that start
Into being are like perfume
from the blossom of the heart;



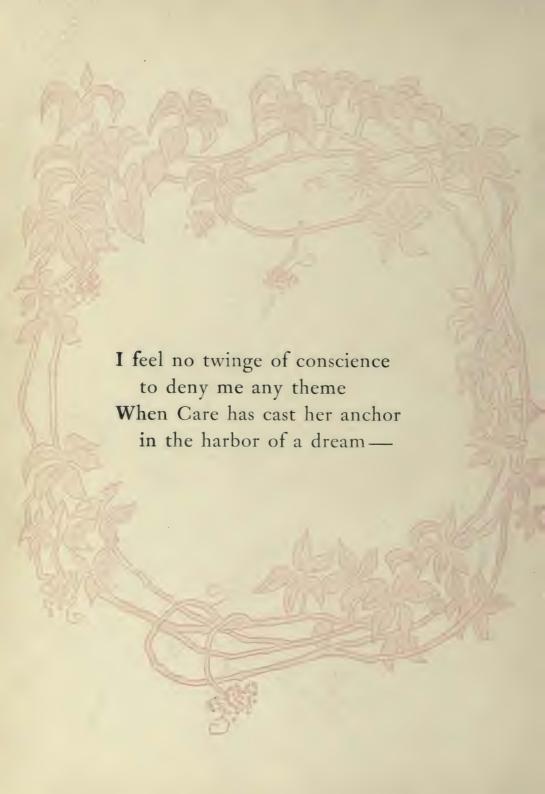


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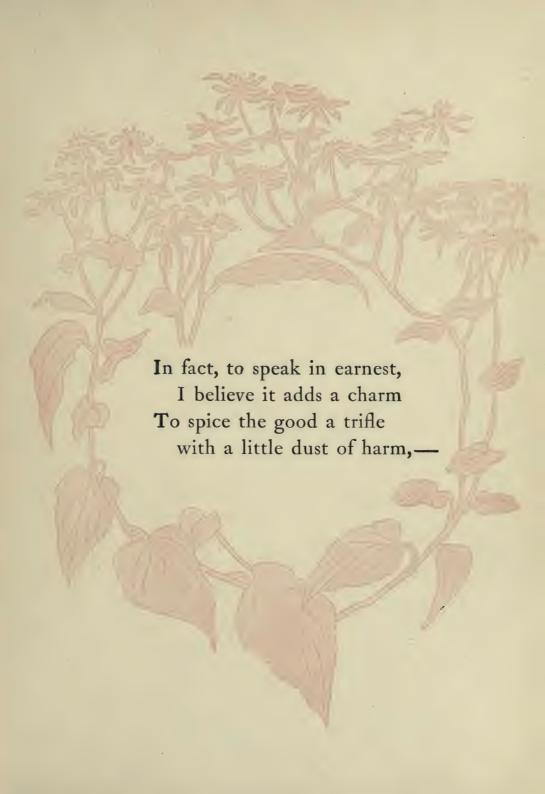
Though I hear beneath my study, like a fluttering of wings,

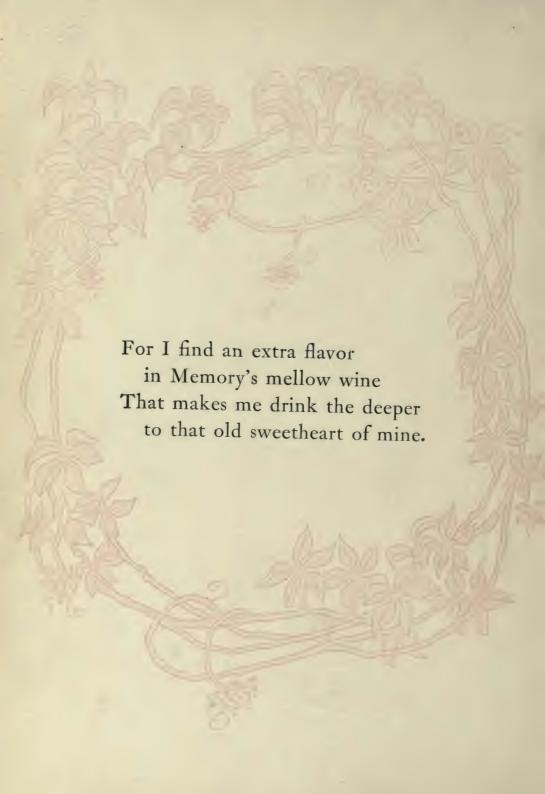
The voices of my children and the mother as she sings—













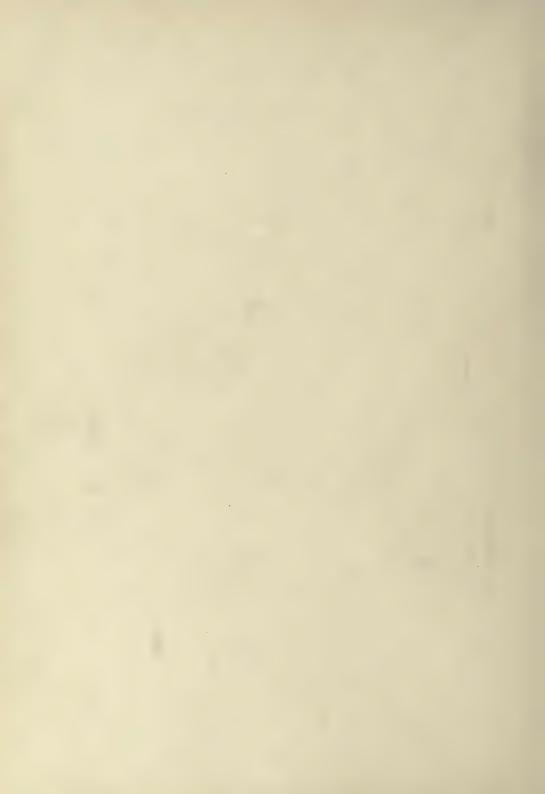
- House the din Christy you

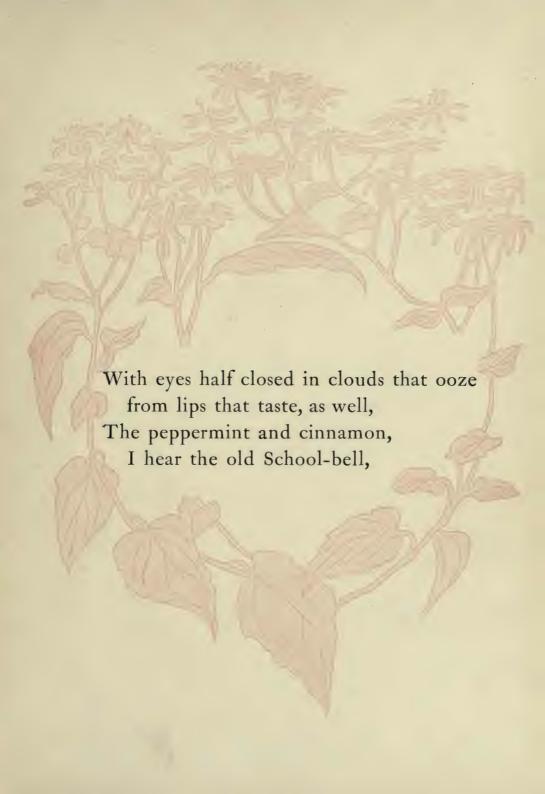


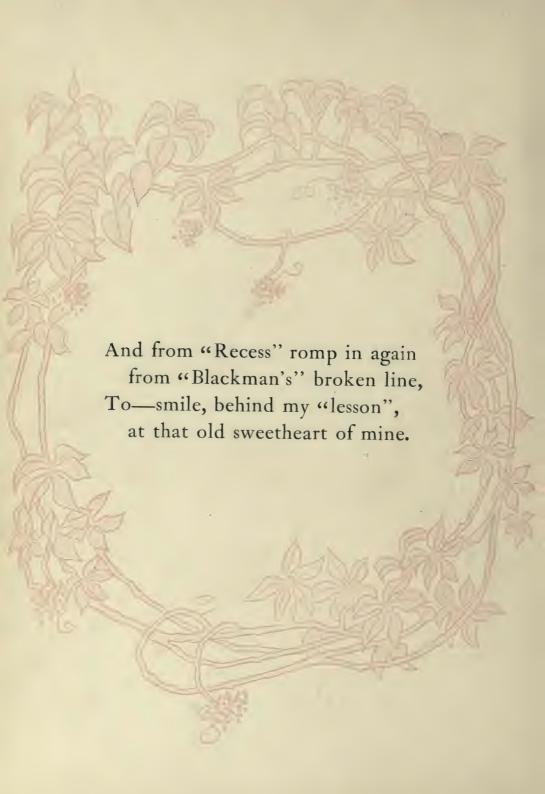


When all the air, to toss and quaff, made life a jubilee And changed the children's shout and laugh to shrieks of ecstasy.

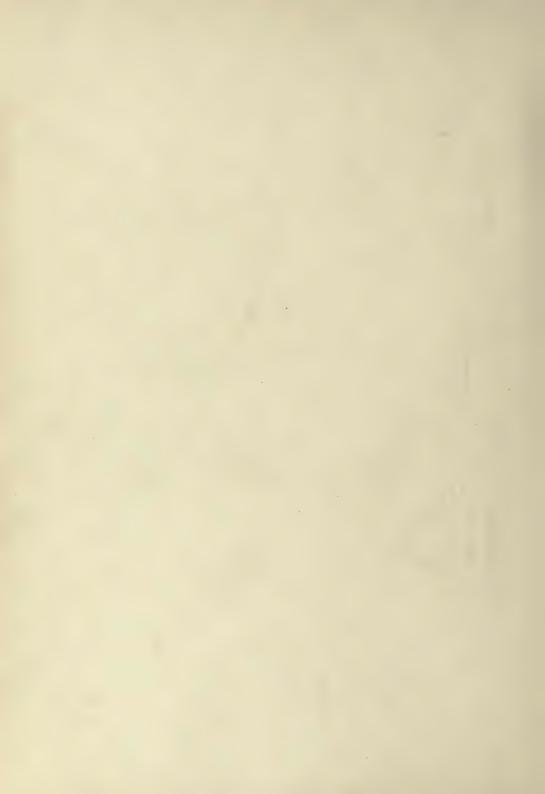


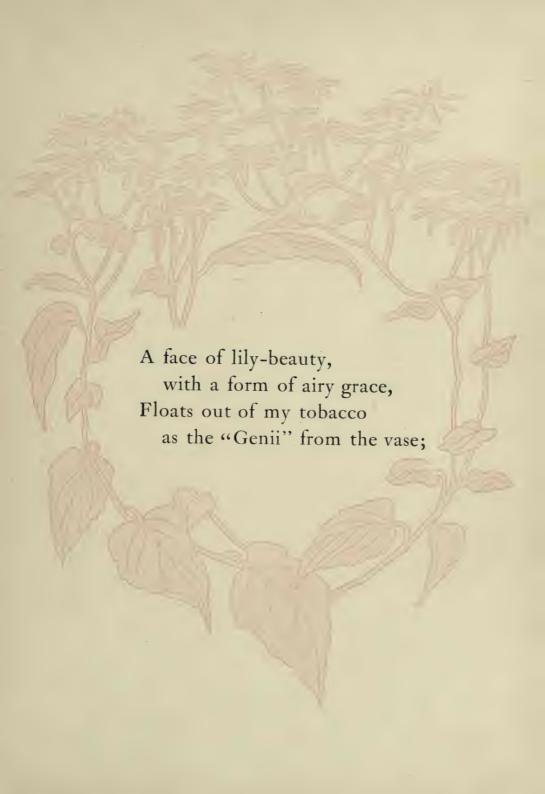


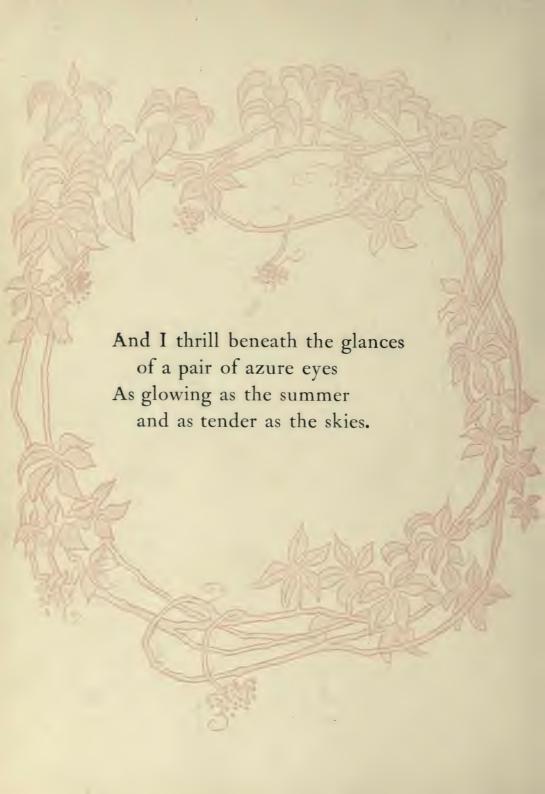






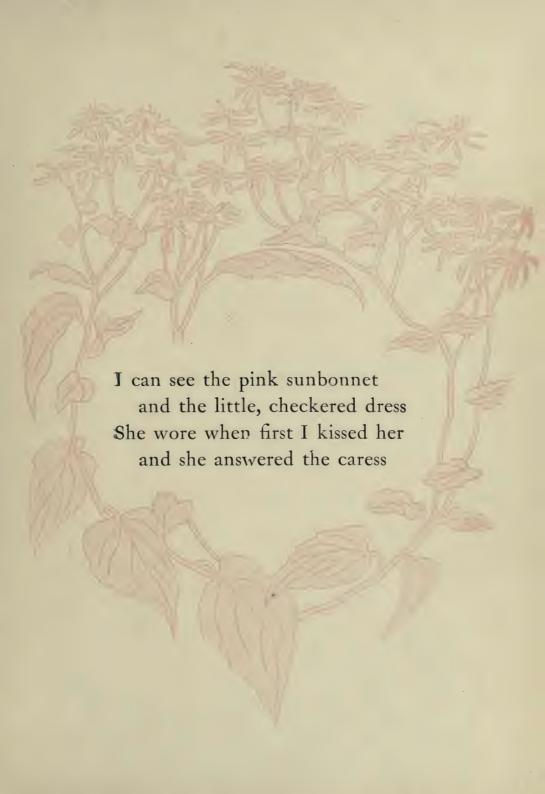


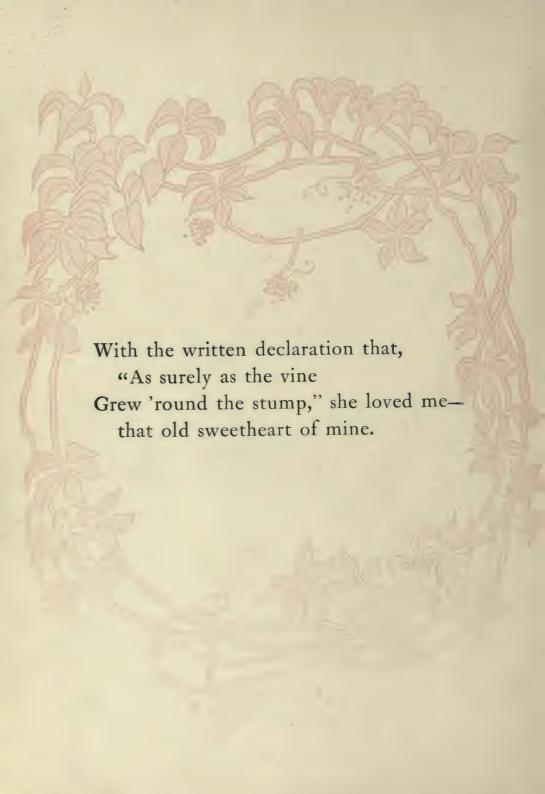




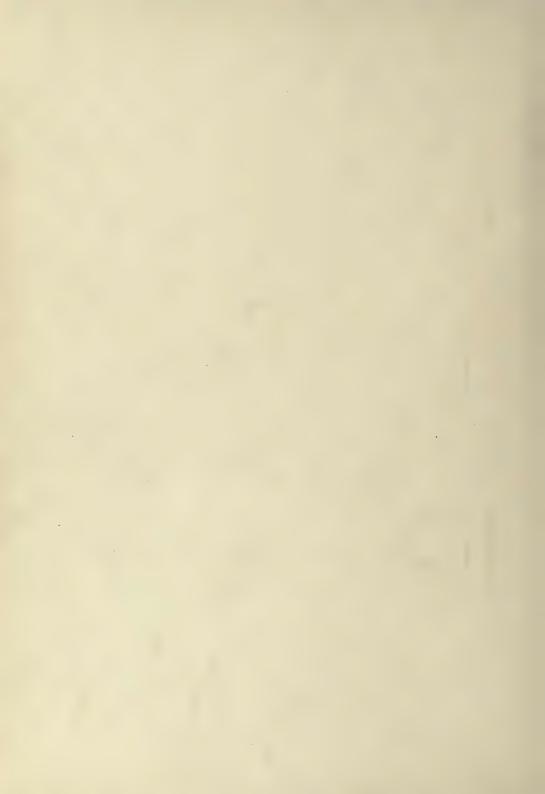








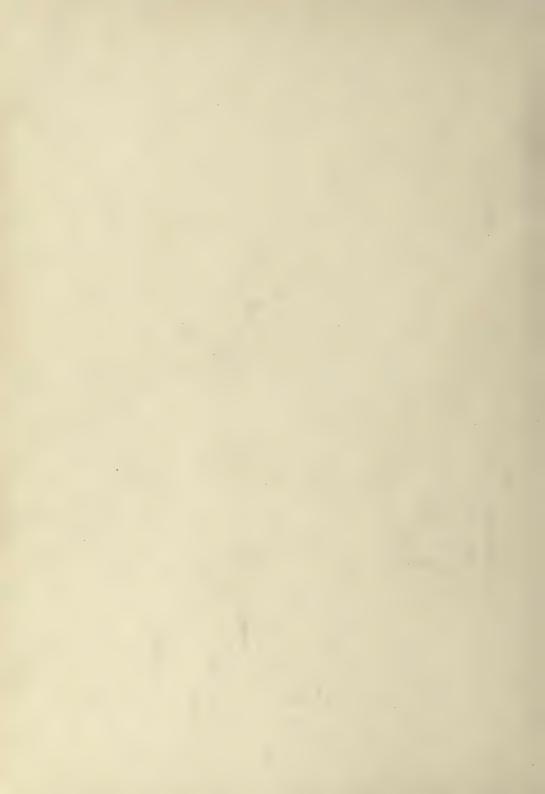




Again I make her presents, in a really helpless way,-The big "Rhode Island Greening"-(I was hungry too, that day!)-







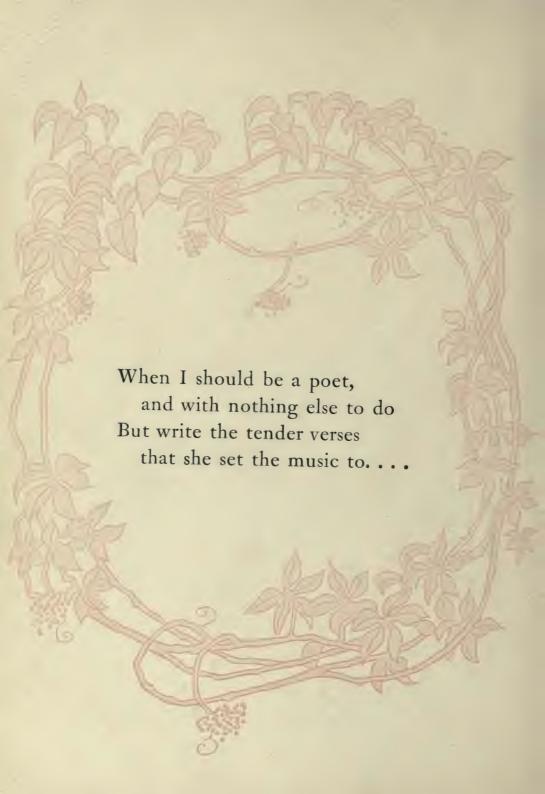
I give my treasures to her—all,—
my pencil—blue-and-red;—
And, if little girls played marbles,
mine should all be hers, instead!—







And again I feel the pressure
of her slender little hand,
As we used to talk together
of the future we had planned,—

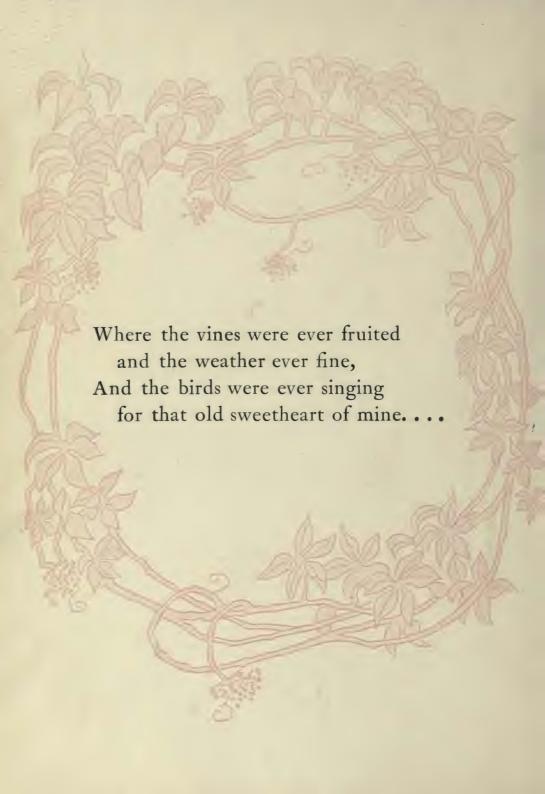




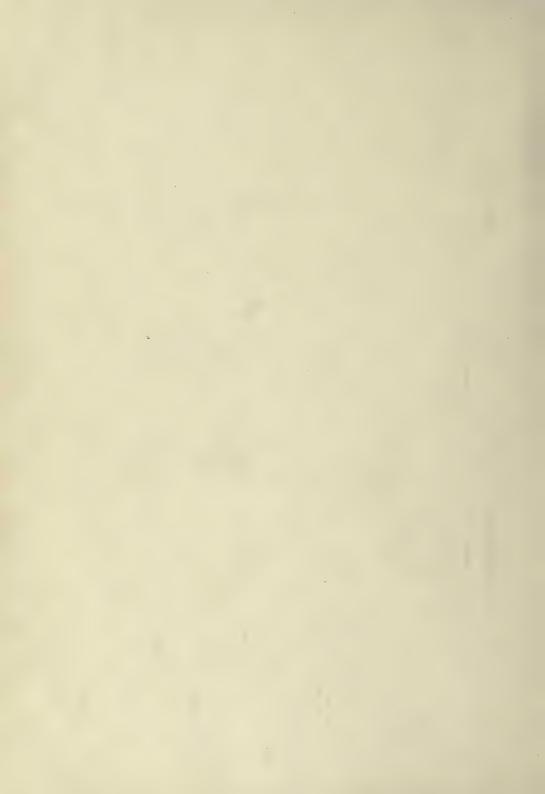
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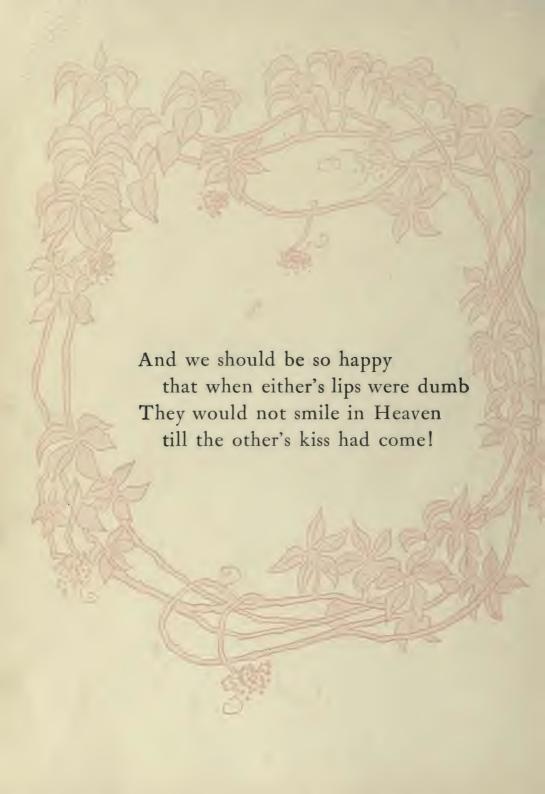
















But, ah, my dream is broken
by a step upon the stair,
And the door is softly opened,
and—my wife is standing there;

